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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Written statement* submitted by the Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[20 August 2018]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.

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Human Rights Violations in Bahrain in the First Half of 2018••

The human rights situation in Bahrain continued to deteriorate in June 2018. 1782 serious human rights violations were observed between the 1st and 30th of June 2018, including arbitrary arrests, house raids, unfair trials, crackdown on peaceful protests, restrictions on freedom of movement, prohibition of Friday prayers, media materials that incite hate speech, torture, ill-treatment, injuries, destruction or confiscation of property and violation of freedom of religion and belief.

The number of violations of June exceeded that of May by 510 violations. The total violations were distributed as follows: 47 cases of arbitrary arrests, including 5 children; 74 citizens received arbitrary sentences, which amounted in total to 194 years and 3 months in prison, 4 revocations of nationalities and BD 14,500, equivalent to approximately US $38,564, of total fines and bails; 112 cases of torture and ill-treatment, including 25 cases of deprivation of treatment; 864 media materials that incite hate speech; 64 illegal raids on houses and residential facilities; 50 crackdowns on peaceful gatherings and protests; 459 individuals who were arrested or accused were referred to court because of trials that violate freedom of expression and peaceful assembly; violation of freedom of movement by the continuation of the siege on Duraz area for 740 days and the imposition of house arrest on the highest religious authority for the Shiite Muslims in Bahrain, Ayatollah Sheikh Isa Qassim, for 401 days without a judicial order or administrative decision; violation of freedom of religion and belief by prohibiting Friday prayer in Duraz 4 times in June, bringing the number of prohibitions to 103 times since 2016; 9 case of illegal confiscation of property; and 12 cases of destruction of property.

In **June**, Bahrain witnessed 255 protests, while since the beginning of the year the number of protests has reached 1950 even though there has been a complete ban on peaceful assembly for 1368 days. The number of arbitrary arrests since the beginning of the year has reached 423, including 60 children. Since 2012, the nationalities of 738 citizens have been revoked for political reasons. Moreover, since the beginning of the year, 502 illegal raids on houses and residential facilities have been conducted; 519 Bahraini citizens, including 5 women and 7 children, have been arbitrarily convicted; total sentences have amounted to 3083 years and 2 months in prison, in addition to a suspended 3-year jail term; total fines imposed on the arbitrarily convicted have amounted to US$ 1,057,840; and 10 sentences of arbitrary deportation and 16 death sentences including 4 cases which finished the levels of litigation have been issued.

Arbitrary arrests, raids and restrictions on freedom of movement

47 cases of arbitrary arrests, including 5 children, have been monitored. As midnight raids continued, 64 illegal raids on houses and residential establishments were monitored; they were carried out without arrest warrants and in a manner that spreads terror among citizens. Moreover, the freedom of movement continued to be violated through the continuation of the security siege on Duraz for 740 days and the imposition of house arrest on the highest religious authority for Shiite Muslims in Bahrain, Ayatollah Sheikh Isa Qassim, for 401 days without a judicial order or administrative decision. It is noted here that the restrictions on freedom of movement in Duraz continued until July 9 before being later terminated.

Meanwhile, the security authorities continued to violate freedom of religion and belief by banning Friday prayers in Duraz for 4 times in June, bringing the number to 103 preventions since 2016. In addition, 1373 Bahraini citizens have been accused or detained in the Public Prosecution and presented to the Bahraini judiciary for reasons relating to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. It is noteworthy that those who were detained or accused because of taking part in the Duraz peaceful assembly (171 individuals) were presented to court on June 26, 2018, and the accused in the case of the so-called "Zulfiqar Battalions" (138 individuals) were presented on June 28, 2018 at the first appeal hearing.

Hate speech: 864 media materials

864 media materials and messages that incite or help to incite hatred against human rights defenders, political activists and Bahraini citizens were observed in June. Those materials were distributed among 112 media articles published in

the official press and 752 materials published on social media. The journalists, Faisal al-Sheikh, Farid Hassan, Mona Mutawa, Saeed al-Hamad, Sawsan al-Shaer, Fawzia al-Rasheed and Othman al-Majed continued to publish hate materials.

The hate-inciting media materials published in official press are distributed as follows: 21 articles in the Bahraini al-Ayam newspaper, 36 articles in the Bahraini Akhbar al-Khaleej newspaper, 17 articles in the Bahraini al-Bilad newspaper, and 38 articles in the Bahraini al-Watan newspaper.

In addition, 182 hate materials on the trial of Sheikh Ali Salman, Secretary General of the al-Wefaq National Islamic Society, were monitored. 59 hate materials against Prince Zeid bin Ra'ad al-Hussein, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, were monitored due to his criticism of the human rights situation in Bahrain. Moreover, 61 hate materials against granting Head of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, Nabeel Rajab, an honorary citizenship by the Paris Municipality were monitored.

Unfair trials

Arbitrary sentences continued to be issued this month against a number of citizens. 74 Bahraini citizens were arbitrarily sentenced, and the trials culminated on June 5, 2018, as 29 individuals were arbitrarily convicted. The total of all issued arbitrary sentences amounted to the following: 194 years and 3 months in prison, BD 14,500 equivalent to approximately US $38,564 of total fines and bails, and 4 sentences of revocation of nationalities.

In addition, a death sentence and revocation of nationality were upheld by the Court of Cassation against Salman Isa Salman Ali, who is from al-Eker, on June 4, 2018.

Since the beginning of 2018, 8 children, who are under the age of 18, were arbitrarily sentenced. The total arbitrary sentences issued against them amounted to 28 years and six months in prison, 2 sentences of revocation of nationality and a fine of BD 2,784, equivalent to approximately $ 7,381. All arbitrary sentences were issued by the high court. Three of the children are from Bani Jamra, two are from Aali and the rest are from Karana and Sitra.

The most prominent sentences were against: Sadiq Jafar Mohammed Abdali, whose sentence included 15-year jail term, revocation of nationality, BD 2,784 fine and confiscation of seizures on February 1, 2018, and Sadiq Jafar al-Sammak, who was sentenced to 3 years in prison and his nationality, was revoked.

Torture, ill-treatment and destruction of property

112 cases of torture and ill-treatment were observed, however, it was noted that the number of prisoners, who are being deprived of treatment as a means of torture and retaliation, has increased this month as well.

The forms of ill-treatment observed were: deprivation of making calls (the case of detainee Ali al-Shagal from Duraz, 60 days, in addition to other detainees); illegal solitary confinement of several detainees, including detainee Sheikh Zuhair Ashour due to a religious event (performing "Laylat al-Qadr" rituals) and detainee Haida al-Mulla (child) due to refusing to sign a statement which he does not know its content; deprivation of attending funerals of first degree relatives (detainee Mostafa al-Madani from Bilad al-Qadeem after his brother died); deprivation of treatment of 25 cases; in addition, detainee Mohammad Hassan Abdul-Hussein from Ghuraifa was transferred to a cell dedicated for criminal prisoners and contagious diseases even though he does not suffer from any disease.

Results and recommendations

1 Bahraini authorities committed many arbitrary detentions against citizens and opposition activists, which to the least fall under the second or third categories, or both, accordance with the procedural definition adopted by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detentions.

2. The Bahraini authorities used a group of articles in its Penal Code, that criminalize freedom of expression in peaceful manners and aims; in order to silence the political opponents, human rights defenders and journalist activists, and others.

3. Those assigned to interrogate the detainees used very painful, yet non-fatal, torture methods, which do not leave marks on the victim's body, in order to hide any evidence that might lead to accountability.

4. The General Secretariat of the Grievances of the Ministry of Interior, and the Special Investigations Unit of the Public Prosecution, failed to eradicate torture and ill-treatment in prisons, or prevent impunity. The General Secretariat of the Grievances failed to issue transparent report on matters of complaints it received, and failed in its measures to tackle those complaints. The Special Investigations Unit failed to implement accountability on security men involved in cases of torture and ill-treatment.

5. We urge member states to further call on Bahrain to allow UN Special Rapporteurs to visit Bahrain, to monitor the human rights situation, and present their recommendations.

**Bahrain Forum for Human Rights (BFHR), NGO without consultative status, also shares the views exprcssed in this statement.